Introduction to Activity Management in Long Term Care

January 25 – 29, 2027

Important Notes

- This course offers 45-hours of training including in-person instruction, time spent on course-related projects and presentations, and self-directed study. The in-person sessions are scheduled for five days in January.
- Attendance will be monitored throughout the training.
- Credit for each session is only given if you are in attendance.
- Registration fees must be paid in full to receive your certificate.

Tips and Reminders

- Be prepared to interact with the leaders and your colleagues with minimum distractions as possible.
- During the sessions, mute your phone or direct all calls to voicemail, and turn off notifications.
- Have examples you can share about activities you have led. These ideas will be shared during the training.
- Be prepared to share a special event you have hosted or would like to host in your center. Be sure to include details from start to finish. These events will be shared with the class.
- To complete the 45-hours of training, you will be required to listen to the pre-recorded webinars and pass a test afterwards. You may listen to these webinars on your own time; however, you must complete this work **no later than February 12, 2027** to receive credit.

Course Schedule

Monday, January 25, 2027 (7.75 hours)

9:00 – 9:15 am | Welcome & Introductions

9:15 – 11:15 am | Course Overview—Let's Jump Right In!

Brenda Walker, ADC, AAP-BC, CDP | Activity Director and Volunteer Coordinator | Roman Eagle Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Inc.

As we kick off the course, you will be given opportunities to learn, network, and experience a variety of day-to-day activities. With thoughtful planning and implementation, you will learn to plan many activity programs at minimal cost, as well as how to modify activities to meet specific needs. Together we will identify programs that are meaningful and fulfilling, and fun for all. You will be given ideas, resources, and opportunities for hands-on participation to prepare you for directing the activity program in your facility.

11:15 – 11:30 am | Break

11:30 – 12:30 pm | Activity Department Best Practices

Kenneth Adkins | Administrator | Holston Health and Rehab
Melisha Darnell-Keene | VP of Clinical Services & Quality Improvement | American HealthCare, LLC

Introduction to Activity Management

You will learn a vast array of activities and original service delivery concepts during this session. Participants will assist with problem solving as you write individual plans of action for your department.

12:30 – 1:30 pm | Lunch (on your own)

1:30 – 4:00 pm

Successful Resident Interviews & MDS Coding

This session is specifically designed for those attendees that are currently employed in nursing facilities who want more in-depth and hands-on training regarding documentation.

Documentation Principles

In this session you will review elements required to build an effective care plan. Discussion will include an overview of activities' assessment and an in-depth look at care plan development and implementation. Time has been reserved to address specific care plan challenges and opportunities as experienced in your current practice settings.

4:00 – 4:15 pm | Break

4:15 – 6:15 pm

Care Planning for Activity Professionals

Participants will explore the intent, commonalities, and differences of state regulations for completing the Individual Service Plan (ISP) for assisted living residents and the federal requirements for a comprehensive care plan for nursing center residents. The session will focus on developing and maintaining resident-centered care plans that include participation by the resident and the resident's representative.

Tuesday, January 26, 2027 (8.5 hours)

8:30 – 10:30 am | Filling the Days with Meaning

Brenda Walker

Activity Calendar-Planning for a Day, Week, Month, and Year

This educational session will prepare activity professionals on how to achieve great time-management skills in activity calendar planning. Activity professionals will also expand their perspective about what is the difference between a good activity calendar versus a great activity calendar! Learning techniques that will improve and stimulate the activity professional's insight into quality activity programming, even on a tight budget, will be enhanced through this session.

A Day in the Life of a Resident

Have you ever really noticed that completing caregiving tasks may not equate well with the behaviors of dementia residents? This session will offer you advice and practical how-to on working with individuals in long term care. What can you do with just five minutes to provide engaging activity programming to dementia residents? You will learn how much you can take advantage of every moment, even if it is only a few minutes at a time, to provide meaningful enrichment for all.

Hooray! It's a Themed Week of Events

Are you an activity professional that wants to try something entirely new and different? This session will help you to think outside of the box. Themed weeks of events are weeks that bring about unlimited creativity for the activity professional. These themed weeks also engage every member of a facility family as well as give you a chance to grow your volunteer ranks, and market your facility bed census.

10:30 – 10:45 am | Break

10:45 – 11:45 am | VHCA-VCAL Awards Overview

Doran Hutchinson | Vice President of Member Services and Education | VHCA-VCAL
Brenda Walker

Have you thought about submitting an entry for one of the D.A. "Woody" Brown Community Involvement Awards but don't know how? This session will describe in detail each of the awards (NSNCW/NAWL program or special event program) and what you need to do to prepare for submissions. These awards recognize members who have demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and creativity in designing activity programs that encourage and support their residents and facilities. VHCA-VCAL is honored to acknowledge the outstanding activity programs that involve, entertain, educate, and enrich the individuals in their care.

11:45 – 12:45 pm | Lunch (on your own)

12:45 – 2:15 pm | Regulatory Update for Assisted Living Facilities

Tyia Venable | Licensing Inspector, Central Region | Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Division of Licensing Programs (DOLP)
Chris Robinson | Licensing Administrator | VDSS DOLP

This session will address the standards that relate to providing activities in licensed assisted living facilities. Learn about the inspection process and how activities relate to the standards.

2:15 – 2:30 pm | Break

2:30 – 4:30 pm | What's Cooking?

Brenda Walker

Nothing draws the attention of your residents and staff to the activity room quicker than the smell of something cooking. Even the most reserved residents will come closer for a peek. There are numerous food items that can be prepared with minimal effort, equipment, and cost. This will be a hands-on session with tasty rewards at its conclusion.

4:30 – 4:45 pm | Break

4:45 – 6:45 pm | Prepare for Presentations

Wednesday, January 27, 2027 (7.75 hours)

8:30 – 10:15 am | Arts and Crafts from A-Z

Brenda Walker

This presentation will allow you to discover your creativity, and how to generate positive interactions through arts and crafts with your residents. You will discover that you can create simple, fun, and inexpensive arts and crafts that are meaningful to your residents. This presentation will permit you to try innovative ways to connect your residents to their inner selves to promote their total well-being.

10:15 – 10:30 am | Break

10:30 – 12:15 pm | Providing Quality Care for End of Life and Dementia

Sharon Napper | Certified Dementia Practitioner and Professional Trainer | Alzheimer's Association-Greater Richmond Chapter

Activities for People Nearing End of Life

We will explore the end-of-life process, themes of spiritual engagement, and various ways to engage people who are critically ill. This presentation will provide practical tips and strategies on how to create a comfort kit that can be used by staff and families for those nearing end-of-life.

Dementia Care Best Practices Recommendations

The Alzheimer's Association's 2018 Dementia Care Practice Recommendations were developed to better define quality care across all care settings and throughout the disease course. They are intended for professional care providers who work with individuals living with dementia and their families in residential and community-based care settings. The recommendations outline quality care practices based on a comprehensive review of current evidence, best practices, and expert opinions. Napper will share details about these recommendations, which inform and influence dementia care standards, training, practices, and policy from a person-centered focus.

12:15 – 1:15 pm | Lunch (on your own)

1:15 – 3:30 pm | Dementia Care and Healthy Aging

Sharon Napper

Music & Dementia

Music can enrich the lives of people with Alzheimer's disease, allowing for self-expression and engagement, even after dementia has progressed. Music can be powerful. Studies show music may reduce agitation and improve behavioral issues that are common in the middle-stages of the disease. Even in the late stages of Alzheimer's, a person may be able to tap a beat or sing lyrics to a song from childhood. Music provides a way to connect, even after verbal communication has become difficult. Join us for an engaging lecture on Dementia and Music.

Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body

For centuries, we've known that the health of the brain and the body are connected. But now, science is able to provide insights into how to optimize our physical and cognitive health as we age. Join us to learn about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement, and use hands-on tools to help you incorporate these recommendations into a plan for healthy aging.

3:30 – 3:45 pm | Break

3:45 – 5:45 pm | A Montessori-Based Approach for Aging and Dementia

Kathleen Weissberg, OTD, OTR/L, CMDCP, CDP | National Director of Education | Select Rehabilitation

Developed in the early 20th century, the Montessori method of teaching holds that when you are working with individuals, you must consider their needs and capabilities in concert. What do they like to do? What are they able to do? The focus is not on challenging the individual but instead taking the task a little beyond the comfort zone, so individuals have the opportunity to learn and improve. The Montessori method of caregiving has a very similar goal: engaging the senses to help Alzheimer's and dementia patients and loved ones rediscover the world around them. In this session, participants will learn from a Montessori specialist about the Montessori principles of independence according to one's ability and the benefits of the prepared environment. Participants will learn about the typical symptoms that can be expected as dementia progresses, the fundamental principles of the Montessori method, how to conduct a Montessori-based session, steps to engagement that reduce unwanted behaviors, and the issues that may arise with this approach. Additionally, participants will learn about using case studies and video examples, and how to set up activities/tasks for individuals with dementia using a Montessori Approach.

Thrive Under Fire: Handling Our Customers Like a Pro!

Customer service is the cornerstone of every business and is essential for a strong reputation. We learn about it, we talk about … but do we actually deliver what we say? Customer service in long term care is different from

other industries as it deals with internal customers (staff and colleagues), all customers, and external customers.

Participants will begin by completing a brief self-scored inventory to identify the personality traits that apply to them and be utilized to facilitate a better understanding of themselves and how best they relate with others. Because we each encounter “difficult” customers (staff, residents, and families) in our daily work, the session will address the 11 different “difficult” personalities and offer specific skills, human interface, and strategies to address each type so to bring out the best in people (even at their worst).

Finally, the focus shifts to external customers and offers real-time strategies based on focus group results and best-available evidence. Participants can utilize strategies in their daily work to heighten awareness of customer service with the end goal of improving satisfaction and outcomes, providing what is known as "best care," and enhancing community reputation and referrals.

Thursday, January 28, 2027 (7.25 hours)

8:30 – 9:30 am | Presentation of Special Events

9:30 – 9:45 am | Break

9:45 – 12:15 pm | Ethics, Values, Principles, Decision Making

Annie Rhodes, MS, PhD | Assistant Professor | Virginia Commonwealth University

This program will help you identify the values and beliefs that define what you stand for as a professional. This session will explore how values affect behavior and conduct in making decisions reflecting your morals and principles in everyday work.

12:15 – 1:15 pm | Lunch (on your own)

1:15 – 3:00 pm | Delivering More with Less!

Kim Gunn, PMP | Business Initiatives Manager | Wells Fargo

Are you stressed out? Is your work piling up more each day? Do you even know where to start? Then come prepared to learn some project management practices to ease your stress. You can apply these practices starting today!

3:00 – 3:15 pm | Break

3:15 – 5:15 pm | Making the Magic Come Alive

Kim Gunn

This session will focus on getting to know your residents through planning, developing, and executing an event based on their preferences. Imagine traveling with your residents to their favorite vacation spot. Gunn will conclude this session by sharing tools and a checklist to bring the magic to your residents.

Friday, January 29, 2027 (3.75 hours)

8:30 – 9:30 am | Getting ROI for Activity Programming

Lauren Friedman | Executive Director | Sancerre Atlee Station

In this session, participants will learn how a strong activities department can bring value to the center. The partnership between the executive director, marketing, and activities position will be the focus during this session.

9:30 – 9:45 am | Break

9:45 – 10:15 am | Resident Council

Chad Isabelle, LNHA | Division Vice President of Operations | Saber Healthcare Group, LLC
Ashley Jackson, LNHA, MBA | Regional Vice President of Operations | Saber Healthcare Group, LLC

In this session, the role of the Resident's Council will be discussed. Key areas of discussion will focus on advocacy and representation, enhancing communication, policy influence, improving quality of life and problem-solving and conflict resolution.

10:15 – 11:45 am | Activity Department Empowerment

Learn specific ways to present yourself, improve inter-departmental cooperation, and get buy-in to achieve total quality care.

11:45 – 12:00 pm | Break

12:00 – 12:45 | Wrap-Up

Doran Hutchinson

See the following pages for details on the self-directed study requirements to complete the course.

Self-Directed Study

To complete the 45-hours of training, you will be required to listen to the pre-recorded webinars listed below and pass a test afterwards. You may listen to these webinars on your own time; however, you must complete this work **no later than February 12, 2027** to receive credit.

Behavioral Health: Care Process for Residents with Dementia (6 hours)

Barbara Speedling | Quality of Life Specialist

This four-part webinar series led by Barbara Speedling is designed to assist both nursing facilities and assisted living communities in the development of systems and program to optimize the quality of life and function of residents in long term care (LTC) settings. You'll learn about improving approaches to meeting the health, psychosocial and behavioral health needs of all residents, especially those with dementia.

You will gain the information and resources needed to create systems to facilitate rapid and focused recognition and response to psychosocial and behavioral health needs in the following ways:

- Communicating behavioral management or mental/psychosocial interventions that should be carried out between disciplines and to direct care staff timely and consistently;
- Reviewing behavior and/or mental/psychosocial symptoms and the roles various disciplines play in the management of behavioral and/or mental/psychosocial symptoms on an ongoing basis;
- Communicating what, when, and to whom to report indications of behavioral, mental, and/or emotional status changes to all caregivers; and
- Monitoring implementation of the care plan, effectiveness of interventions, and any changes in symptoms that have occurred over time on an ongoing basis.

Session Descriptions

Session One
The intent and objectives of this course are reviewed in tandem with the revised federal regulations for trauma-informed care and behavioral health. The number of LTC residents with dementia grows every day, resulting in new challenges to achieving quality of life and psychosocial wellbeing. This conversation offers a fresh perspective on developing a person-centered assessment and care plan process.

Session Two
Dementia affects every individual differently. This conversation explores the most effective methods to capture a truly person-centered view of the individual. Addressing the needs of each resident requires a holistic approach to understanding the pre-dementia personality and lifestyle. Co-morbid conditions, such as depression or anxiety, require careful consideration in the development of the care plan. This session revisits some of the tools introduced during the dementia focused survey project and their value in today's assessment process.

Session Three
How do you measure the quality of life of an individual? How do you describe the culture of your LTC community? In this session, we will explore the elements and circumstances that result in an environment that is truly livable. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on LTC as an industry and as individual communities. This session offers a blueprint for rebuilding your community and achieving the cultural confidence and trauma informed perspective required to promote healing and recovery.

Session Four
The revised regulations for residents' rights require that we establish clear criteria for establishing capacity, particularly as it relates to the admission to and discharge from a secure memory care unit. In this final conversation, we will review the elements required for a compliant memory care environment. Additionally, we will review the intent and value of utilizing the Quality Assurance Performance Improvement process to ensure that your hard work is sustained over time.

Toxic to Transparent: A Culture Shift in Communication (1 hour)

Bree Becker, MSN, FNP-C, RNC-MNN | Director of Clinical Quality | Matchwell

This session will help you distinguish between toxic versus transparent communication. Knowing how to identify signs and symptoms of toxic communication and the associated risks to the person, patient, and organization can help you foster a culture of transparent communication. You will also learn how to identify your personal style of communication.

Surviving a Crisis: How to Manage and Protect Your Reputation (1 hour)

Mark Hubbard | Senior Vice President | McGuireWoods Consulting LLC

In a world of 24-hour news cycles and constant tweets, organizations must always be prepared for the unexpected. How quickly you respond with accurate and relevant information can define your reputation in the marketplace. Our communications expert will outline the basic components of a crisis communications plan and provide you with a crisis management checklist.

Addressing Mental Illness: Behavioral Health Webinar Series (2 hours)

Barbara Speedling | Quality of Life Specialist

As the numbers of long term care residents with mental illness increases, the education and training of the staff becomes vital to successfully managing the needs of this population. Unlike dementia, a diagnosis of schizophrenia, bipolar depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, or other chronic mental illness requires a working knowledge of the symptoms and how the disease impacts the individual.

This two-part series: **Personality Disorder** and **Substance Use Disorder and Addiction**, is designed to provide basic, common sense information on these mental health challenges. The most effective avenues to assessment and care planning, as well as helping residents to find satisfaction and a quality of life in the management of their disease are central to these conversations.